

THE SPANISH CONFLICT



Rev. **BERNARD GRIMLEY**, D.D., Ph.D.

ST. ANTHONY GUILD PRESS
PATERSON, NEW JERSEY

1937

COPYRIGHT 1937 BY
ST. ANTHONY'S GUILD
FRANCISCAN MONASTERY
PATERSON, N. J.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE SPANISH CONFLICT

SO MUCH PROPAGANDA HAS BEEN WRITTEN about the issues involved in the present conflict in Spain that the average man is to be forgiven if his sympathies are on the side of the Reds and against General Franco. Military men are rarely pleasant towards the press, and that may explain why so little appears in the American newspapers in favor of the Insurgents or so-called "Rebels," and so much in favor of the Reds. It must be admitted that the Insurgents have conducted their publicity very badly indeed. The other side have known how to exploit the prejudices of young reporters and editors in favor of democracy and popular movements, whilst the Government of New Spain has missed the opportunity to present its case for what it really is: the national and even nationalist resurrection of the country. Certain influences appear also to have been at work to give the Nationalists a bad press, but they need not have had such a triumph in democratic countries if the Nationalists had been more alert.

For the sake of clarity, truth and justice, let us therefore submit the Spanish conflict to a crucial examination in the light of recent history and undoubted facts. We have the words of the Holy Father to guide us, and we know that the Holy See is always the best-informed source in the world. In order to avoid confusion we shall refer to General Franco

and his followers as the Nationalists, and to their opponents as the Reds. The titles will be found to be just and accurate as we proceed. We shall examine

1. The background of the conflict.
2. The Church's responsibility in it.
3. The character of the Spanish Republic.
4. The events immediately preceding the rising.
5. The morality of the rising.
6. The reaction to the rising.
7. The conclusions to be drawn from the above.

1. The Background of the Conflict

In the United States you have been accustomed for so long to good governments, to governments that governed, that your natural reaction to trouble would be to stand by the government solidly and in unity, and so win through to peace and tranquillity. That is as it should be. It is the reward which follows years of efficient government. The political differences between your two great parties have not destroyed national unity. They do not cut deep enough for that. Nor have they made it impossible for the party in power at a given moment to attend to the needs of the nation.

Spain, on the other hand, has not known efficient government for well over a hundred years. Hence government is there held in contempt. Politicians were known for what they were — self-seekers, place-hunters, grafters, men careless of the nation's unity and its needs, indifferent to proper national pride, tradition and glory. Spain has subsisted in spite of its governments. Locked in behind the Pyrenees,

behind its Atlantic and Mediterranean seaboards and its usually tranquil and undefended Portuguese frontier, the country has slowly allowed its feudal traditions to run down, without forming a plan to meet modern conditions.

The physical isolation of Spain is matched by its social and intellectual isolation, due in part to the efforts of the Inquisition to safeguard the faith and morals of the people from the blight of the Reformation. That great storm which wrecked European Christendom did not blow over Spain, which kept its eyes seaward, to the West, across the Atlantic Ocean, to those great South American nations which she had built up by giving them of her best, though she was drained white in the process. Europe did not concern Spain very much after Richelieu had broken her land connections with Austria by wresting the quadrilateral of northern Italy out of their joint control. When Napoleon rudely entered Spain he found a feudal people, a mediaeval society in mellow, tranquil possession of their land and their faith, gently slumbering in the golden afternoon of a great achievement. He shocked the old lady, the grand old lady that Spain was then, by the blasphemies of his soldiers, and by their dissolute conduct. Aroused, she called on her sons, and they rose in their wrath, perfect exponents of the art of guerilla warfare, and drove him out, aided, but robbed as well, by the Wellington who was later to link his name with the victory of Waterloo.

After that the old lady tried to sleep again, but the shock was too great, and the time for sleep was past. Echoes of "liberty" were in the air, and people talked of statutes and constitutions, of popular rights and popular government, of parliaments too. And that to the nation which

had originated parliaments, in the assemblies of the king and his nobles first held at Jaca, to consider ways and means for driving the Moors out of Spain! But not that kind of parliament was meant now. Now it was to be a meeting of the commoners to advise the Crown, if not alone, then with as little interference as possible. The days of democracy had arrived, whilst the table was still uncleared of the feasts of feudalism.

Perhaps it was too much to expect the grandees of Old Spain, proud of the privilege which allowed them to appear with covered heads in the presence of their monarchs, because it gave them a kind of equality with royalty, to don the red Phrygian bonnet, which was the badge of the democratic revolt, and to seek equality and leadership amongst the people. Too deferential toward the Crown to do what the English nobility did, pocket the thing and its prerogatives, the Spanish grandees were yet too grand to guide and lead the popular movement. It was the beginning of the Spanish tragedy, for it gave the grafters a free hand, and they were not slow to take the opportunity presented. In so far as they were soldiers, the Spanish nobility felt that they had an overriding mandate to interfere with government by risings and pronunciamientos (their achievements against Napoleon were their title, popularly endorsed); but they did not see that their first duty was to lead and educate the masses. They were still too feudal to be republican on the one hand, or constitutional democrats on the other. Their blinkered minds prevented an orderly evolution toward a Spanish monarchical and aristocratic state in which sufficient voice would be given to the people to make them content. The tragedy had begun, and Spanish democracy found

its inspiration abroad instead of at home. The Grand Orient Lodges, openly hostile to God and religion (unlike American and British Freemasonry outside the Scottish Rite), began to be a power in Spanish politics, and an alien spirit of hostility to the Church was imported into Spain.

From Ferdinand VII, installed by the Allies who defeated Napoleon, to Alfonso XIII, driven out by the French and Spanish Grand Orient Lodges, we read the story of the failure of the Spanish people, and especially of the Spanish aristocracy, to nationalize the democratic movement. Perhaps the Liberalism which produced democracy was up against the inherently Catholic theological mind which is native to Spain. The Spaniards are nothing if not logical, and Liberalism as a philosophy is not compatible with Catholic theology.* A race of theologians would be quick to detect its oppositions with theology, a race of logicians would be incapable of that practical toleration which has enabled American and British Catholics to profit to the utmost by the freedom which Liberalism introduced, without succumbing to the intellectual and theological errors implied in it.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that Spain has never assimilated the Liberalist tradition, and the Nationalist

* Care is necessary here in distinguishing Liberalism as a philosophy from that mere practical tolerance of various shades of opinions, whether political or social, which sometimes goes by the name of political Liberalism. The former produced the latter, it is true, but philosophic Liberalism has been so often condemned by the Church, because of the way that it fosters religious indifference, that in a Catholic country, where there were no religious divisions to cover by political unity—as was the case in Spain—it could never harmonize with national habits of thought growing out of religious unity.

movement of today is much nearer to the Spanish mind in its open detestation of Liberalism and all its works and pomps. In particular it detests those artificial political divisions which Liberalism fosters, in England between Conservatives and Liberals, and in America between Republicans and Democrats, which we have known how to treat lightly, but which a logical and theological mind either accentuates to the point of bitterness and disunion, or else despises as futile. Reality in politics was not possible in Spain without either divisions and rancor or a sense of futility, at least whilst Liberalism was the guiding star of politics. The past hundred years have proved that to the point of nausea, and anyone not cognizant of the history of that period would enjoy reading "Unhappy Spain" by Pierre Crabites, (Louisiana State University Press). The author has the courage to put his finger on the Grand Orient Lodges as the major, and foreign, element attempting to inflict upon Spain a democratic system unsuited to the minds of the people, and in the attempt causing a conflict with the Church, which was particularly attuned to the Spanish mind, and part of the nation's glory and pride.

One of the first acts of the Masonic Liberalists was to despoil the Church of those possessions of land which were necessary to her in a feudal system, a system which called upon her to pay her own way, as the king paid his. In 1836 the Church was robbed of everything she possessed and reduced to a state of beggary. Thus was the influence of the Grand Orient first felt in unhappy Spain. It is easy to say that she should have turned around and begun to live on the direct and voluntary offerings of the faithful, as she does throughout the English-speaking world; but it takes a

people a long time to shake off habits of mind ingrained through the centuries. Spaniards knew that the piety of their ancestors had richly endowed the Church, so that she might have economic independence and pay her own way. It took them a hundred years to realize that there is another way. Church collections for the support of the ministers were introduced generally only after 1931.

The spoliation aroused so much bitterness that the Freemasons temporized by paying salaries to the bishops and secular priests, niggardly salaries, which became constantly more inadequate as the value of money fell. The appointment of bishops remained a prerogative of the Crown, but the lower clergy were in sore straits to live, whilst the bishops' salaries were adequate as personal remuneration, but a joke if regarded as a fund to finance the activities of a modern diocese. The attitude of the Masonic Liberals was that the State should disown the Church, minimize her influence in politics and in the social and the intellectual life of the nation. The estrangement of Church and State had begun, leading to the paralyzing of the Church as a popular educator, as an influence for socially uplifting the masses, and as an indirect but potent stabilizer of political unity. This brings us to the second of our inquiries.

2. The Church's Responsibility in the Conflict

The Church is conservative by temperament. She can be relied upon not to produce a crisis without first exploring every avenue to peaceful co-operation. She regards anarchy as the greatest evil of civil society, and she is prepared to bear much from antagonistic and hostile govern-

ments rather than plunge society into anarchy. She is not unwilling to see change, but she prefers the gradual changes of natural evolution to revolutionary movements. In Spain she was true to herself. Capable, had she chosen to do so, of working Spain into a ferment against the Freemasons, she nevertheless remained true to the Catholic tradition of passive resistance to evil, and relied on her ability to conquer through her sufferings.

She had the faults of the Catholic tradition, too. She was slow to find out the need of organizing her children *as Catholics* in a country which was still, in spite of the injected Grand Orient venom, Catholic in structure, in mind, in tradition and in practice. She was slow to realize that political diseases can ultimately undermine faith, and slower still to find the effective remedy and apply it. Catholic Action, which the Church has long possessed in the non-Latin countries in substance if not in name, was the answer to the social disruption leading to loss of faith now falling on Spain. How many times the Popes called upon Spanish Catholics to unite politically, socially and intellectually, and how long it took their words to strike root! The reason was not disrespect for the Pope's advice, but the tangled political situation, leading to two fierce civil wars during the nineteenth century, and to the stagnation of Spanish life and effort.

The Church acquiesced too easily in being driven out of that intellectual leadership which is hers by right. That is easy to state, but not so easy to avoid in a country which is situated as Spain then was. Now, we can see that the Church should have made a bold bid for her independence. She should have rejected the salaries offered by the Liberals,

and have gone to the masses, where she belongs most securely. If possible she should have ended the royal prerogative of nominating the bishops, as well as the concursus system.

A word about that is necessary. All promotions to benefices, such as canonries, professorships, etc., were made after a public examination to establish the most learned candidate. Because of the miserable pittance which he could expect as a humble parish priest in a country village, or a minor town parish, the young priest was anxious to secure a benefice, and get on the road to promotion. Obviously the earlier he did this the better chance he had of success. So, whilst his head was still full of the book-learning acquired in the seminary, the young priest entered his name in a concursus, or public theological disputation amongst priests. If successful he had acquired a modest but ample competence for life — and one more brilliant young priest was taken "out of the ranks," and out of contact with the poor masses who most needed whatever he could give of guidance and teaching. In effect this meant that promotion was won on brains rather than on service and merit and hard work amongst the people. It meant also that the second best, the less eager, were left to do the main work of the Catholic priesthood: sanctifying the laity. Meager salaries also meant that better-class boys were not attracted to the ranks of the secular clergy.

At the same time there was introduced a division between the lucky, or higher, and the unlucky, or lower, ranks of the clergy, and this, combined with the "functionary" habit of mind of the bishops, by which they were aloof not only from the lower ranks of the clergy but also from the

rank and file of the laity, led to further stagnation and indifference. The position was one which could have been righted by a handful of reforming bishops; but kings have to be saints before they consider promoting reformers to the bishopric. There were few saints amongst recent Spanish kings and queens.

The poor of Spain had, however, a great respect for their religion until agitators got to work in their midst; but one is forced to the conclusion that the agitator would have had no chance if the Church had been better organized and more alert. As regards the practice of their religion, we must bear in mind that the Latin does not attach the same importance to weekly attendance at Sunday Mass as the test of practical Catholicism as does, say, the Irish mind, and the mind affected by the Irish tradition. Hence a visitor to Spain might conclude that religion was dead in many hearts which a Spanish priest would regard as Catholic, but lazy. The *fiestas* would be a better psychological test of a Latin's faith than Sunday Mass. The peasant who took no part in the traditional *fiestas* of Spain, who contemned them, could safely be regarded as anti-Catholic, but it would be extremely unsafe to use the test of attendance at Sunday Mass, except for the vitality of an individual's faith. It is clear that those who do not attend are under-nourished, weak, liable to fall, even to fall away altogether in the end.

On this basis I would say that by 1931 one-tenth of Spain had ceased to be Catholic, and I would feel rather liberal in my estimate. Another tenth had become enfeebled and in danger, but they were not lost. In fact the events of the past ten months have saved them, if the evidence in my hands is conclusive. The work of the future is to con-

solidate them. The population of Spain has remained remarkably steady for a long while — round about 21,000,000. That gives us just over 2,000,000 people not to be counted as Catholics effectively, though the majority of them would have been baptized, confirmed, communicated and married in the Church. They would also want a priest when they were dying.

It was amongst this submerged tenth that the agitators worked, directing their attention to their *political* grievances. That point is of importance. It would have been futile to try to work them up against the Church, for the poor Spanish peasant was well aware that the Church was as poor as he was. At any rate his parish priest was as poor as a church mouse. It is more than significant, in view of what I have written about Spain's bad governments, that the most successful agitators preached Anarchy, the system which teaches that all government is necessarily bad and useless. The attack upon the Church was oblique and indirect, because she did not tolerate Anarchy, Socialism, Syndicalism and so on.

If the figures representing Anarchist membership in Spain sound alarming, it may be that they should be compared with the so-called "leakage" in English-speaking countries, before we proceed to apportion blame to the Spanish clergy. Certainly the wild charges of immorality amongst the Spanish priests are false. Foreign priests and laypeople who have spent their lives in Spain, and who traced these charges to their source, assured me that my own estimate, that the priests of Spain were morally good and above reproach, is correct. Human nature ensures everywhere an occasional scandal, but there is no more hu-

man nature in the Spanish clergy than in their brethren everywhere else. We have already seen that the Church was poor, that she did not rank as a landowner, and therefore she was not drawn by wealth into the ranks of the rich and the landowners in this struggle.

The religious orders had naturally not been idle since the confiscation a century ago. They had again built up colleges, hospitals and institutes of various kinds; and behind them must have stood a moderate capital, just as there must have been a moderate diocesan capital fund as well, but nothing to justify the propaganda of the Reds that the Church was wealthy. A monastery or a college appears palatial, however, to a man living in one or two rooms in a slum, and there may be some individual Spaniards genuinely deceived by appearances into thinking that the religious orders were wealthy. This suspicion would get a further appearance of truth from the fact that the religious orders were naturally friendly with the boys whom they had educated, and received from them occasional gifts and legacies for their works, educational and social. It is obvious that a poverty-ridden Church could educate only those willing to pay for their schooling. Moreover the State of Spain had assumed the task of providing a national education system, and the 45 to 50 percent illiteracy of the Spanish poor reflects badly on the way successive Spanish governments have lived up to their undertakings. It is probable that 35 out of every 50 or 55 Spaniards who were literate owed their education, in whole or in part, to the Church, and the piety of their parents, who were willing to pay for their children to have a Catholic education. That leaves the government's record poor indeed, with this in ad-

dition that the State universities were hotbeds of political intrigue, and not particularly good as educational centers.

Much of the animosity against the Jesuits was due to the success of the Jesuit schools and colleges. The State did not like to see its prizes going regularly to Jesuit-trained scholars. At the same time we must recognize that certain privileges of the Orders were used without sufficient consideration for the rights and feelings of the secular priests, and that there was not, as a result, that harmonious feeling between regulars and seculars which exists elsewhere.

The Church was not in any way responsible for Franco's rising. She neither called for it nor instigated it. She would probably have kept aloof from it altogether except for the action of the Reds, who responded to the rising by attacking the Church.

3. The Character of the Spanish Republic

If the successive governments of Spain were for the past hundred years politely hostile to the Church, the Republic was openly and aggressively hostile. That is explained by the genesis of the Republic. It was the product of the Grand Orient Lodges of France and Spain. "The shadow Cabinet of 1930 — which ultimately forced the king to abdicate — contained no less than seven Masons out of ten: Azana, Prieto, Lerroux, Caballero, Martinez Barrio, Alvaro de Albornoz, Fernando de los Rios," writes Fr. P. J. Gannon, S. J., in "Studies" (March, 1937). "The Provisional Government of 1931 was nearly identical in composition; it contained seven Masons out of eleven. There were ninety-five Freemasons in the first *Cortes Constituentes*" — the national

assembly which formed the Republican Constitution — “and almost the first step of the Order was to seize control of the government machine by placing thirty of the Brothers in the key positions of the State. The Bulletin of the Thirty-Third Degree, edited by the Supreme Council, wrote: ‘It is impossible to realize a political revolution more completely Masonic than the Spanish Revolution.’”

Just as an indication of the extremes of anti-Catholic action contained in the Republican Constitution we may mention the following provisions: Teaching orders were forbidden to engage in teaching. The Jesuit schools and colleges, with those of the other Orders, were forthwith closed. Though 50 percent of the population was illiterate, it was better that the percentage should increase rather than the young be taught by religious teachers! The Jesuits were forbidden to live community life. Relations with the Vatican were to be suspended. Salaries to bishops and priests were to be stopped within two years. (Collections in church for the maintenance of the clergy commenced now.) Social action by the Church was to cease (hospitals, leper colonies, etc.). Chaplains were no longer to be appointed to hospitals — that in a country where almost every dying person would want the ministrations of a priest! Separation of Church and State was to be enforced in every department. The Church was to make a return of its wealth, and to divest itself of all stocks and shares within two years. Education was to be completely laicized, though there were no lay teachers to take the place of the priests and religious. Divorce was introduced, and freedom of all cults allowed.

In short the Church was completely legislated out of existence. Religion was to be an affair of the home and the

Church and no more. No influence in social life was to be permitted to the Church, and none in public life. To show that they were in earnest, the Government connived at church-burnings and convent-raids in Madrid, Malaga, Seville and other places. Spanish Catholics were paralyzed by shock when the text of the Constitution was revealed. There was no time to organize, and a great fear had been aroused by the church-burnings. Azana went to the polls on his Constitution and, with no opposition possible on the part of the Catholics, opened the first Republican Cortes with his own Republican Alliance in possession of 145 seats, Socialists 114, and Radical Socialists, 56 seats. These are the "Left" parties of Spain. Niceto Alcala Zamora was elected President, and this man, who as a Deputy had refused to vote the Constitution because it offended his conscience as a Catholic, found that his scruples vanished as President, and he signed the Constitution! He was promptly nicknamed "Pontius Pilate," the name being the more appropriate on account of the piety of his wife.

The first republican government lasted from December 11, 1931, till November, 1933, some twenty-three months, during which the Catholics were steadily organizing *as Catholics* for the first time in Spanish history, at first in a political organization known as Popular Action (not to be confused with Catholic Action, under the presidency of the bishops, and the lay presidency of Angel Herrera). The leader of Popular Action was Gil Robles, whose organization came later to be known as the *Ceda*, a portmanteau name for the "Spanish Confederation of Parties of the Right." It contained Alfonsan Monarchists, Carlist Monarchists, Republicans, and almost every shade of legitimate

opinion, but this was their pact, that they would sink their differences and unite to remove by constitutional methods the anti-Catholic clauses of the Constitution. If they could baptize the Constitution they would do so. If events showed that they could not reform it, they would then consider their course of action.

The next election was historic. It was the first and the last in Spain which was fairly conducted. For the first time in modern history the elections were not "made" by the *caciques* or local political bosses acting under orders from Madrid. Azana was on trial by his compatriots. We shall see what Spain thought of his anti-Catholic Constitution. For his confederation of nine Republican Parties, fresh from their triumph over the king, and freshly laureled with the new Republican Constitution, he secured only 99 seats! The judgment of Spain on him and his associates was clear. In spite of his threats before and during the elections (that if he lost at the polls he would take the fight into the streets), the country flouted him. To Gil Robles the country gave its confidence, awarding him 207 seats, and to the Center under Lerroux it gave 167 seats. Spain was not going to be made anti-Catholic against its will!

In view of Azana's threats of civil war the Catholics did not press for the right to govern, which was theirs in view of their majority. They allowed Lerroux and Azana's Leftist forces to form a coalition government, which was so rocked by the financial and graft scandals revealed to the public that Lerroux felt compelled, in October, 1934, to ask the Catholics to take three seats in his Cabinet. Instantly the Left made good its threats of vengeance, and revolts broke out in Asturias and Cataluna, whilst riotings and

church-burnings occurred in Madrid. The seriousness of the revolt can be gauged by the following figures concerning Oviedo alone, which was practically destroyed: killed, 1,051 civilians, 100 officers and men of the Civil Guard, 98 soldiers and 86 police and excise officers; wounded, 2,951; buildings destroyed and damaged by fire, 730. Arms and ammunition captured from the rebels included 89,000 rifles, 33,000 pistols and 350,000 rounds of ammunition.

This indicates rebellion on the grand scale, and against the only constitutional government fairly elected that modern Spain has known — but as the revolt was accompanied by an orgy of priest-murders, killing of seminarians and nuns, was in fact a typically Marxian class outrage, the press of the world decided that its duty was to be sympathetic to the rebels! Not one word then about the wickedness of rebellion. If priests were being killed and churches burned, why, it must be a war to liberate the Spanish peasant from the clutches of the Church! It could not possibly be the dress rehearsal for a national Red revolt, to come later on, if the dress rehearsal should be suppressed!

But we must not overrun our story. The shock to the government was so great, and the Catholics were so disgusted by the leniency shown to the leaders of the rebellion whilst the rank and file were being punished, that they began to demand their right to form a Catholic government. They kept up their demand after the rebellion was quelled in the spring of 1935 until the latter part of the year, when they heard that Azana had forced the President, always unwilling to call in the Catholics, to order fresh elections. Azana had made a fateful decision. He had

decided to accept alliance with the Communists in the then new-fangled Popular Front promoted by Moscow.

4. Events Immediately Preceding the Rising

It was generally believed that Azana was behind the Asturian and Catalan revolts of 1934, ready to accept office as President under the rebels if they were successful. He was found in hiding in Barcelona after the suppression, and the circumstances looked black enough against him, but he was in no way punished for the rebellion. On the contrary, he seems to have become ever more fanatical against the Church, ever more determined that the Catholics should not be allowed to govern, in a country still overwhelmingly Catholic.

In August, 1935, Moscow had solemnly ordered its followers all over the world to accept and operate Dimitrov's plan for hastening world revolution, the plan known as the Popular Front. This was designed to unite all working-class parties in one electoral appeal under the aegis and hidden control of the Communists, who, when the time was ripe, would denounce the government which they had made, discredit it, then paralyze it by strikes and disorder, and finally overthrow it by violence, and establish in its place the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was a brilliant scheme from the Communist point of view, as it hastened the day's advent on which Lenin's strategy, copied from the tactics of the Paris Commune, could be adopted. We must know the Popular Front for what it is, a Communist device.

Lenin had always believed that the ignorance and poverty of the Spanish peasants made Spain an ideal starting

point for the social revolution in Europe, and Trotsky had visited Spain early in the days of the Republic to try to win the support of the Spanish Anarchists for the Communists. He pointed out to them what is perfectly true, that Communism believes in Anarchy as the ideal state of mankind, but sees the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a preliminary stage in the evolution toward Anarchy. It was generally reported that Trotsky found the Spanish Anarchists at that time obdurate, and unwilling to consider even a temporary government under the proletariat as anything but an unmixed evil. If that is so, and it is doubtful, then something must have happened between his visit and the end of 1935 to change the hearts of the Anarchists, for they came forward then as ardent champions of the first essay in Popular Front tactics, the Spanish elections of February, 1936.

In those elections, held under Portela Valladares, who was not even a Deputy to the Cortes, and who was put in by Zamora to "make" them in traditional Spanish style, the Popular Front secured an overwhelming majority of seats on a minority vote. The Catholics had the majority of votes by over 200,000, but juggling and chicanery deprived them of a just proportion of the seats. It was all fixed for the other side. There was at that date a prevalent European feeling in favor of the Left, for the Left favored the League of Nations, which Russia was then using to force a war between Italy and the democratic powers over the Abyssinian affair. Consequently French government circles favored a Left and anti-Italian victory in Spain. Great Britain, too, would obviously feel easier if those who had given her the use of Spanish ports in the event of a

pro-League war with Italy were returned with a comfortable majority. Everything international was against a victory by the Catholics. The pity is that Gil Robles seemed to be unaware of the mine which was being dug under him.

The strength of the Communists in the Popular Front was their key position. Their numbers were relatively negligible as compared with the Anarchists, but they had produced the scheme which had brought victory, and they had financed it to success. They also had given it a good international reception, but their greatest asset was their Marxian logic, and their clear-cut plans for the future. They could well afford to keep out of the Popular Front Cabinet, for they had all the power they needed in their Anarchist allies, and in the control which through them they had over the trade unions and syndicates.

It was only to be expected that the victory would be celebrated by breaking heads, burning churches and the shooting of a few priests here and there. Many precedents existed for that, in the birth of the Republic, and in the Asturian and Catalan rebellions. We waited for it, and it all duly occurred according to program. Then we all waited for the government to begin tightening the reins and getting the hotheads under control, but that did not happen.

On the contrary, things went from bad to worse. Disorder developed into open anarchy. Spaniards began to arrive in Rome, Paris, London and Berlin with appalling tales of savagery rampant, of attacks upon life and property made in broad daylight, the police looking on powerless, or, as was frequently the case, utterly indifferent. Town after town was succumbing to anarchy. A censorship was put on the press, and newspapers arrived abroad with whole col-

umns blacked out. I made careful inquiries and discovered that the government was suppressing all accounts of daylight shootings of prominent citizens, of priests and nuns, and of the burning of property and churches, frequently accompanied by revolting cruelties. Foreigners began to leave Spain. They arrived in the various capitals with the same story: the government had lost all control, and was doing nothing to regain it. Either Azana was powerless, or he had no will to check the lawless elements. He had set up a police of his own, the *guardias de asalto*, or shock police. Spain had reached the state of private armies, private police forces, and open vendetta was rife.

The Catholics began to protest in the Cortes, where they were received with threats against their lives. Pistols were leveled at them in the Parliament itself. Still they continued to protest against the growing anarchy, and to call upon the government to function, to protect life and property. On June 16 Gil Robles interrogated the government about its intentions, and read this appalling list of outrages, circumstantial in every detail, committed between the elections, in the middle of February, and June 16: Dead, 269; injured, 1,287; churches completely destroyed, 160; churches partly damaged, 251; political clubs wrecked, 69; political clubs damaged, 312; "general" strikes, 113; partial strikes, 228; newspaper offices totally destroyed, 10; newspaper offices damaged, 33; armed robberies, 138.

No attempt has ever been made to disprove this statement, sufficient evidence in itself that the government had abdicated to the mob and to anarchy. Bad as the statement is, it was amplified twice by Calvo Sotelo, a Catholic Deputy from Galicia, and one of the finest men modern Spain has

produced, one to whom everybody looked as the eventual leader and unifier of Spain, a man in whom there was no guile. He was a Monarchist, and had been Minister of Finance under Primo de Rivera's dictatorship — incidentally, the only government of modern Spain which got things done, and which could justly be exempted from the charges we have made against the governments of the past century. Sotelo's last speech was early in July, and after he had made it his speedy end was announced by Dolores Ibarruri, the Communist Deputy who calls herself *La Pasionaria* — "The Passion Flower." Five days later, on July 12, 1936, he, the bravest and best of Spaniards, was shot to death by Azana's own shock police! It was the last straw, and his death was the call to a great people to rise and save itself from destruction.

The army chiefs have themselves admitted that it was Calvo Sotelo's murder which decided them to intervene. They had written to Azana frequently, calling his attention to the growing anarchy, and proffering their services to restore order. Imagine the degradation of a country in which such an offer was necessary! In any democratic country the army would be ordered out the moment the police lost control of the situation. The Spanish army had to ask to be allowed to do its duty, and got no reply from its rulers! This can be explained only by remembering the army politicians who had so frequently interfered with government in Spain, by recalling the army's part in the suppression of the Asturian and Catalan rebellions in 1934, and by Azana's own hatred of the army. He had, immediately the Republic was established, dispensed with the services of thousands of its officers, connived at wholesale

evasion of military service, and kept the remaining officers constantly "on the run" from one post to another, so that they should have no effective contact with their soldiers. The rank and file were subjected to constant Red propaganda of the vilest and most obscene character, especially obscene in all that concerned the Church, and Red Comrades were in every barracks to read and interpret it to the illiterate peasant soldiers.

The army also claims that just before the insurrection they had come into possession of the complete plot for a Red revolt to establish throughout Spain the dictatorship of the proletariat. Certainly such a plot, or what reads like such a plot, has been published in the areas occupied by the army, and the local plans, dovetailing with the general scheme, have also been published in Spain and Morocco. We cannot yet express a definite opinion on the genuineness of the plot, but we point out that it is now common news that a similar plan existed to create a Red State in France on September 25, 1936. M. Blum made reference to it in a public speech, and I had heard about it in England as early as July.

Why the haste to plunge Europe so soon into the Red Terror? Even the Reds must have known that they were taking a chance in France, and that things might go heavily against them. The event showed that they were taking risk enough in Spain. We shall get the answer to all these questions in full when we get to know the real differences between Trotsky and Stalin, and the real meaning of the trials of the Trotskyists in Russia this year, but it does seem as if one of the great divergences between Stalin and Trotsky concerns the procedure to be followed in fomenting world

revolution. Stalin thinks that nothing effective can be done till Russia is heavily armed. Trotsky is anxious to go ahead now, and a victory for the Reds in Spain, with all its possible repercussions in France and elsewhere, would have proved Trotsky's case against Stalin. And remember that Trotsky had visited Spain! Whatever be the truth about that, it seems highly probable that a Red plot did exist in Spain, and that the anarchy produced there was produced in accordance with Lenin's well-known tactics. At any rate the army's affirmation that they rose to prevent this plot being carried out is not disproved. But the first cause of the rising was the anarchy prevalent all over Spain.

5. The Morality of the Rising

It is common Catholic teaching that a citizen owes allegiance to properly constituted government, and we need not dispute about it, for it is so generally accepted amongst us. On that basis there are some who condemn the rising out of hand, but that is a hasty conclusion. There is an implication in the phrase "a properly constituted government" which is of primary importance. Otherwise our theologians would find it difficult to approve of any rebellion except against an improperly constituted government. Yet I imagine that few theologians would deny that the revolt headed by George Washington was justified, though the British Crown was a properly constituted government.

It is implied that the government is more than properly constituted, that it is also functioning, and functioning constitutionally, and that is where the British government failed in America, and where Azana's government failed in Spain.

The plain truth is that the government of Azana was not functioning at all, much less constitutionally. Azana may have been willing to let the Communists and Anarchists do as they liked. On the other hand he may have hoped to outwit them after the elections, as M. Blum has managed to do for so long in France; but if that was his hope it was a vain one. The Anarchists believe in anarchy. Does that need proving? The Communists also believe in anarchy, as a means for destroying a capitalist government, and ultimately as the ideal state of mankind after a novitiate under proletarian dictatorship. Events were to manifest clearly after the army's rising that the Anarchists and Communists were the only real power behind the Popular Front. Is it too much to believe that they did produce anarchy in Spain? With all the evidence in our possession, evidence solemnly recorded three times in the Cortes and undisputed?

Anarchy is the supreme evil of civil society, and every citizen is bound to help suppress it. The army had a positive duty to suppress it. No democrat can deny that. He would be the first to insist upon it. Are we to hold, then, that the army was absolved of its duty because the President, who should have called upon it, had either gone over to the side of the Anarchists, or was too frightened and powerless to speak? Then civil society is doomed every time the Communists manage to control a President!

We are driven to the conclusion that the army was bound to do what it did, on the evidence of the existing anarchy alone, and quite apart from the Red plot for July 25, later postponed to August 1. It alone had the power, but not too much of it, to save Spain, and events were to show that the populace acclaimed the army as its

liberator. If Azana would not legalize the rising, as some hoped that he would once it was proclaimed, then at least the people of Spain legalized it, and after all the people are the ultimate arbiters. Governments exist for the people, not people for the governments. A people does not lose its rights because its rulers succumb to anarchy and abandon it.

6. The Reaction to the Rising

(A) ON THE PART OF THE PEOPLE

The rising was acclaimed immediately in two-thirds of Spain. The people rallied to the cry: "*Arriba Espana!*" — "Up, Spain!" At last there was to be order, protection of life and property, justice and due process of law. At last some answer could be made to those who had cried: "*Viva el Soviet!*" and "*Viva Rusia!*" The rising was Spain's assertion of dominion within her own territory. It was similar to Lincoln's stand for the Union. There must be no separatism under Russia's auspices.

In the Vascongada, or Basque territory, the province of Navarra was solid for the rising, Alava practically solid, Guipuzcoa solid in the great majority; but the fourth province, Biscay, was under the control of the Spanish Anarchist Federation and was against the rising. There are over 60,000 Basque soldiers in Franco's army, in spite of the fact that the Reds had hoped to have them on their side by granting them that local independence for which some have agitated so long. The Basques were not deceived, as to the majority of them, in the crucial moment, and they knew how to reply to the Reds: *Non tali auxilio, nec mediis istis* — our independence shall not come to us through such

helpers and such means. The press often reports the doings of the *Requetes*, without apparently knowing that the *Requetes* are Basques, for it tries to give the impression at the same time that all the Basques are against the rising.

In Cataluna the Anarchists and Reds had long been preparing for an attempt by force of arms, and so well known was this that the army chiefs ordered General Goded, in command at Barcelona, not to attempt to hold Barcelona, but to march into Valencia and hold that town. The Reds soon defeated him in Barcelona, and later shot him for the alleged crime of rebellion. In Madrid, too, the Reds were well prepared, and so they held Madrid, part of the Basque country and the whole of Cataluna. Those are the scenes of the fighting.

(B) ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT

Immediately the rising broke out, Azana and his "democratic" government were thrust on one side, and the Anarchists and Communists seized power. They put in at the head Largo Caballero, a man who has frequently boasted that his destiny is to be the Lenin of Spain. In Madrid and Barcelona they armed the mob, their final act of abdication of any moral claim to authority. A government that can survive only by arming the dregs of the populace has already forfeited all title to consideration. Yet that is precisely what happened in Madrid and Barcelona. In the former city 60,000 rifles were handed out to the mob, including mere youths and even girls, from the Anarchist headquarters. They had been preparing. The armed rabble was excited by speeches, by radio appeals, by the printed

word and by whispering campaigns, to start a regular class war on the "Fascists." A "Fascist" was any priest (the clergy actually were accused of firing from the church tops on the people!), any capitalist, or member of the bourgeoisie, in short any respectable and decent citizen. Soon every church in the city had been turned into a garage or sleeping place, and no Mass has been said in Madrid publicly since last July. Thousands of priests, Brothers and nuns were slaughtered as class enemies, and Anarchist bands went hunting every night, and killing those whose only crime, as the Pope says in his Encyclical on Communism, was "that they are good Christians or at least opposed to atheistic Communism." The Encyclical was dated March 19, 1937, and there we read that "even up to the present moment masses of them are slain almost daily for no other offense."

What is true of Madrid is equally true of Barcelona and Valencia. In those three cities alone conservative estimates supplied to the governments of the United States, France and other countries reveal the following ghastly total of men, women and children ruthlessly slaughtered, not on the field of battle, or in assaults upon cities and ports, but massacred in cold-blooded class warfare:

	Killed
The Madrid area	60,000
The Valencia area	30,000
The Barcelona area	50,000
	<hr/> 140,000

(See the "Commonweal," May 1, 1937). Is this democracy? Is this the kind of government which can claim loyalty? Which can label the rest of Spain "Rebels"?

It is plain that the Communists and Anarchists stole the government, and behind the appearances, tenuous and misleading, of legality, have armed the rabble for a Marxian class-elimination. Contrast all this with the peace and order in the rest of Spain under Franco, and you will realize why he has 240,000 front-line troops today in place of the handful of a scattered army with which he began the rising, and why he has another 500,000 in reserve. Spain is with him against the Reds. His foreign assistants could leave him tomorrow and still he could manage the fight. Against him he has 80,000 of the Communist International Brigade, the terrorized Catalans, who will desert to him in great numbers if forced to fight against Spain, and the remnants of the Basques of Biscay.

7. Conclusion

The Church in Spain has given its total support to General Franco because there is no alternative. The Catholics of Spain are Spaniards and Catholics. They can be neither under the Reds. That is why the whole hierarchy of Spain, and every priest of repute and sense, is with him, even though the insurrection be Nationalist and not primarily religious. Franco is a good Catholic, who has promised a concordat with the Church, and a government not Fascist but after the Portuguese model, with a return to the old Spanish institution of the Municipality, which will allow scope for local feelings such as those of the Basques and Catalans.

In Cataluna the Anarchists are in open revolt against the attempts of the Valencia "government" to keep them in order, attempts due to the threats of other governments

to recognize General Franco unless the nightly slaughter of class enemies ceases forthwith.

Already men like J. L. Garvin, an acute and reliable editor, with first-class information on his desk, and a man of unquestioned honesty, can write ("Observer," London, April 25): "The Reds cannot win because against them impregnably are at least two-thirds and probably three-fourths of the Spanish people proper — mark that distinction — including its strongest elements, occupying the dominating interior of the land. Their weight will tell by degrees as it has always told. . . . The Valencia junta under Largo Caballero does not control even Catalonia [witness the Anarchist open revolt there — B. G.] or the Basque region. . . . The Reds cannot win, not merely because they are a minority in the numerical sense. . . but because they are up against what is indestructible in the historic soul of Spain. . . . The main thing is that the exultant Russian hope of a Bolshevik Spain as the basis of Communist expansion in all Western Europe has failed forever. . . . We believe that in the end there will not be a single Red government remaining in any district in Spain. . . . Class war does not work."

With that we agree whole-heartedly, but we wonder how much longer the democracies of the world are going to swallow the Red propaganda which has been current about the Spanish conflict? We have done our little to undo it, and we hope that every reader will pass on the information we have presented in these pages, and pray for Spain, the land which saved us from the Moslems, and has so far saved us from the Reds. May the salvation be permanent!